

Ayurveda – *The Healing Touch!*

Mrs. Sabine Simon appeared like a breathless whirlwind in my ayurvedic practice with a delay of exactly 10 minutes. She was clad in a grey top with black jeans to match.

“Sorry Dr. Jeevan” she said trying to catch her breath, “I’m a bit late. Unfortunately, my car broke down. Something always seems to happen whenever I have an important appointment!”.

“That’s quite alright, Mrs. Simon” I replied in soothing tones. “Now you just relax, take your time and we’ll first begin by talking about your interest in ayurveda and your expectations, shall we? May I offer you something to drink?”

“Oh yes, Dr. Jeevan!” she said gratefully, her nervous, darting eyes signalling thirst. “Some mineral water, please – with fizz!”.

I went about preparing her drink, Mrs. Simon softly hummed, her fingers drumming gently on the arm of the chair. I offered her the promised water, which she accepted with a smile and finished all at once, gulping loudly.

I observed her wavy, fine hair which she had kept neatly in place so as to avoid it falling on her thin forehead. Although Mrs. Simon was 48 years of age, her skin appeared older by its dry quality. Her tendons were prominent, her cheek bones were sunken, her eyes lay deep in their sockets. Her body was of medium build, a long neck merging into a flat chest.

With each of my observations, I had begun compiling my initial ayurvedic diagnosis. Either Mrs. Sabine Simon was of Vata/Pitta constitution or she was suffering from Vata diseases.

“Well, Mrs. Simon” I began “would you like to begin by telling me the reason for your visit here?”

“One of my friends went to Kerala” she began conversationally, “She did a pancha karma therapy and described the relief and improvement in her condition. She described all the different massages, herbal applications, the nutritional aspects... I felt that ayurveda might be able to tell me more about my own individual health problems. I’m now keen on a pancha karma treatment myself”.

“Mrs. Simon, are you suffering from any kind of disease or would you say you are totally healthy?” I asked. “Would you like to undergo treatment as a preventive measure or as a cure for a particular affliction?”

“Both” she answered immediately. “I’ve been suffering from polyarthritis for the past 6 years. I take cortisones and analgesics. During the last 2 years I’ve been through a lot of stress with my husband and I’ve had to move out and look for a new flat. I’m not working anymore either because of the pain. I just wish I could get rid of this pain. I simply can’t spend the rest of my life taking cortisones and analgesics” There was a sudden flash of fire in her otherwise dulled expression.

“ When my friend told me about her experience with ayurveda, I just hoped that there may be some opportunity for improvement for me here too”. Her eyes were now full of yearning.

“Alright then, Mrs. Simon, we’re going to start right at the beginning. You are going to tell me the step-by-step story of all the diseases and symptoms you have ever had in your life and all the measures and medication you have taken when these afflictions developed. First I will listen to your story and thereafter I will ask you questions”.

Mrs. Simon sighed, as if reminiscing a long and stoney path of past illness. “I’ve had this pain in my joints for a long long time” she began. “Six years ago when I came back home from skiing, I had this severe pain developing in my joints, particularly the knees, toes and fingers. The next day I went to the orthopaedist and after that to a rheumatologist for the diagnosis. Since then, I’ve been under medication. I’m doing regular physiotherapy too. For the past 6 months I’ve been taking 10 mg. of cortisone and whenever the pain increases, the analgesic tablets are there to be taken”.

She opened her handbag. “Oh God” she moaned hopelessly “I’ve forgotten to bring my tablets and the medical records as well...”. She was a picture of despair. I was not surprised by her general air of forgetfulness.

“Was it Prednisolone and Diclophenac?” I asked kindly, trying to guide her out of her despair. “Yes, that’s it” she replied, relieved.

We continued. “Have you any other complaints at present?”

“Not really, nothing special. Some simple things like dry skin and a lot of stress. Sometimes I also suffer from severe tiredness but I don’t suppose that is of real importance to you...”

I hastened to correct her. “You’re very wrong there! In ayurveda, every single little detail matters! Your whole mental and physical state matters! So now, again: anything else which may occur to you?”

“Nothing more I can think of right now. I think that’s more than enough anyway! If I could just get rid of this pain, I’d be ever so thankful ...”

I grew emphatic. “Mrs. Simon, ayurveda does not merely look at symptoms to treat and suppress. We are talking about a whole chain of reactions taking place in our body during our whole span of life. These are reactions to circumstances coming from the outside world. Each and every change in impulse or circumstance from the outside will trigger off a new reaction in the inside of our mind and body. For example: Nobody will get an arthritic attack on a full moon day!” So, I really do need more information”.

“What is the character, the nature of your pain? Its an important question to make me reach a dhosha diagnosis”.

Mrs. Simon looked doubtful. “Character??? Hmmmm.... A sort of breaking pain?” she asked hesitantly.

“Is there any seasonal or diurnal variation of this pain? Let me explain further. Is the pain more acute at particular times of day or during certain climatic conditions?”

Mrs. Simon mused on the question. “Actually, the pain is more during the evenings when I begin to relax. Seasons initially never had any influence but for the last 3 years, winter or any sort of damp weather did start to cause a lot of pain. But now, the pain is always prevalent – during all seasons”.

“How about swelling or burning?” I queried, taking down my notes.

“I used to have swellings previously. I don’t have them any more, though. But my knees burn! And sometimes they get really red!”.

“How is your appetite?” I asked, changing to another subject.

“Good!” Mrs. Simon smiled guiltily. “I like eating several times. Mostly sweets. I know that’s not healthy. But chocolates are my favourites!”

“Now tell me about your pattern of food” I encouraged.

Mrs. Simon’s moment of guilt vanished and was replaced by an expression of churchlike piety. “I usually do eat healthy food” she said matter of factly. “I eat fruit, wholemeal breads, yoghurt in the morning”. For lunch, lots of fresh salads”. She paused here, waiting for the gravity of these glad tidings to sink in. “In the evenings, a normal German meal – bread and cheeses. I’m a vegetarian most of the time you know. Its only once in a while I eat meat. I rather prefer fish. I simply adore spicy food. Indian food is my favourite!”. She leaned back in her chair like a child pleased to have given teacher the correct answers.

But my mind’s eye, however, had another vision. I saw the serpent Vata feeding on Mrs. Simons ravaged body. I saw him sweeping out the healthy, natural inborn body intelligence which resides within all of us as the Lord Dhanwantari – God of Healing. A stab of pity shot through me for this poor woman who was convinced that her daily food was nutritious and of high quality for her bodily needs.

I was silent for a while, sunk in thought. I continued: “How about your drinking habits?”

“I don’t drink alcohol. I do drink a lot of mineral water, though”

“Do you like fizzy water? Or would you prefer mineral water without the fizz?”

“Without fizz” she replied pushing her glass in front of her with a blank smile.

“How is your bowel motion?” I asked.

Mrs. Simon’s look was questioning. Where was there a connection between polyarthritis and bowel motion?

“Motion is normal”

“And what, pray is “normal”?” I asked smiling. “Every day? “

“Not every day, every second or third day”.

“And the consistency?” Hard or soft? More in the direction of diarrhoea or constipation?”

Mrs. Simon seemed somewhat irritated by these questions but replied “not diarrhoea”

My questioning continued. "Tell me, do you have haemorrhoids?"

"Yes"

"Dry or bleedin?"

"Dry"

"How is your sleep?"

"Sleep??" the patient reacted as if this were a word alien to her. "Ohhh..... very bad" She sighed in resignation. "Its so difficult for me to sleep. I'm always up by 3 in the morning. After that I cant go back to sleep. I'm tired then in the morning. So normally I make up for it in the afternoon for a couple of hours".

"Can you tell me if you have ever had any serious diseases in the past where you were admitted to hospital or even had operations?" I asked.

"I had the regular children's diseases like dermatitis and measles and stuff. Operations? Let me think... I had a disc prolapse and before that my uterus was removed. Only the uterus – not the ovaries."

"Can you tell me why the uterus was removed?"

"I had so much bleeding and I had a myoma – more than 15 cms large".

"How was your menstruation before all these problems?"

"Ohhh.... That was always a problem. Severe pain, depression. All kinds of PMS... I had to take lots of pain killers, contraceptive pills. The flow was also little. Two to three days the most. With lots of clots – a horrible time it was".

"When was the uterus removed?"

"It was 10 years ago. I was 38 then".

After further questions, I found a lot of Vata and Pitta symptoms mixed up in a long and never-ending queue.

I found tinnitus, cold feet and cold hands. I found severe back pain, tension headaches, palpitation, giddiness. I found flatulence, fullness of stomach after food intake, fear complex, irritability and depression. All these symptoms had become part of Ms. Simon's normal regular life pattern. So much so that she did not really look upon them as afflictions out of the ordinary. I concluded Vata involvement. At the same time the irritability, the sharp looks and burning quality of the pain with red knee joints showed a slight pitta involvement in her diseases.

We plowed on, getting deeper . "Mrs. Simon, lets come to your psychological well-being. How do you see your present life? Your activities and your emotions?"

"Well, Doctor, I'm generally an active person. I also insist on doing things correctly and as perfectly as possible. But right now, I have one real fear. Existential fear". Mrs. Simon started to cry silently. "I'm totally exhausted. Pain and loneliness depress me. I even try to sleep during the day. I don't really have a goal in life any more. I cant believe this is me! I seem to have changed into someone completely different!" Her lips trembled, her words came haltingly.

“The separation from my husband brought on so many changes in my life. In a way, the break did me a lot of good. On the other hand, loneliness and a sort of depression took hold of my daily life”. Sabine Simon stopped here, overwhelmed by her sad memories. I proffered a sympathetic tissue and she accepted it gratefully, dabbing her nose and eyes.

Her eyes were red but they did not glisten with any unshed tears. There was barely any moisture. I saw that the water element in her body had dehydrated, leaving behind an increase in the fire and air elements. I missed the unctuous, loving quality of “Sneha” - unctuous love – in her whole behaviour. I saw dissatisfaction mingled with frustration.

I had no more questions. I already had made my diagnosis: an imbalance of the elements both in her mental and physical functions.

“Ms. Simon” I began gently, “Let’s both see what this age-old medical system called “Ayurveda” can do for you”.

“Time is God.....” Everything needs proper time.

“Leave the task for time to accomplish. You yourself should now wake up and act in the present”

“I am now going to explain to you how Ayurveda sees your disease and I am going to interpret Ayurvedic basic philosophy and how it will deal with your personal case.

To get you back on your feet, we have to rid the word “Disease” of its prefix “Dis” and then what do we have there? We have “Ease”! When there is pain in the body and in the mind, it is difficult to be in a situation of “ease”. So we go ahead and correct the malfunctions of our mind and body and not only just correct the “structure.

Ayurveda explains this with a beautiful approach to disease and health. But for you, Ms. Simon, to understand, we have to begin at the beginning.

The Ayurvedic principle is based on the five elements. They are ether, air, fire, water and firmament, or say, earth. Everything that exists consists of these five elements in varying degrees. They are also symbolically used as qualities. You and I as humans, the flowering garden and the dog outside, this office here, the traffic on the road, the whole universe – all that ever was, that is and will ever be, is born out of the five basic ingredients that make up this universe. There can not be more and there is no less of the basic materials or building blocks, so to speak. So speak the ancient scriptures.

These five elements have a basic state of harmony and balance. This is what we humans call “health” or “ease” . When the five elements are in a state of imbalance, we come into a state of “dis-ease”. So, balance means health and imbalance means no-health. In your case, we have a case where your mind and body harbour imbalance in the elements of fire and air. We have a state of great disturbance in the mind and body here. I come to this conclusion by observing what you say, the description of your symptoms, how you say it and by observing many other seemingly insignificant factors such as the way you walk, talk, gesticulate, how you are dressed, the times at which your symptoms show up, in what sequence they have come into your life and last but by no means least, how you have lived your past life”.

Ms. Simon shuffled her feet uncomfortably. Doubtlessly, she appeared alarmed to have been transparent in the eyes of an ayurvedic doctor and that she had been caught off guard.

“Did your friend explain the functions of the body as termed in Ayurveda? We have Vata, Pitta and Kapha. In Sanskrit, we call them “Dhoshas”. This means a function which can very easily turn into a malfunction. The equilibrium of these three dhoshas means a state of health.

“Vata” is the movement of force. “Pitta” is the heat generated by our movements. “Kapha” is the structure where the movement and the heat is generated. Everything which is, in this universe is categorized into these three “dhoshas”. All living and non-living beings, even diseases are categorized as a Vata, Pitta or Kapha disease.

When we come back to your case, the Vata / air and the Pitta / fire dhoshas are “vitiated” or aggravated in your system. They are in a state of unhealthy increase.

Vata or Air-related diseases will produce pain. They will mainly be skeletal, bone or joint diseases. Arthritis, cervical spondilosis, migraine, interstinal colic, lumbago, sciatic neuritis, chronic constipation, insomnia and insanity are some of the examples for Vata diseases. The type of person prone to these kind of Vata diseases will have an erratic personality, he will be lean, he will be talkative and gesture a lot”.

Sabine Simon looked amazed. “But what about the diseases I have? How do they seek me out as their victim?”

I was glad to answer her question: “When you talk about your joint pains, your sleeplessness, your exhaustion, depression, fear complex, constipation and your tinnitus in the ears, you emphasize what I had already begun to diagnose. They explain the quantity of Vata which is increased in your mind and body. The corresponding sense organs of Vata are the skin and ears. There too, you have symptoms like dryness and coldness which are the main properties of Vata! Tinnitus clearly shows the involvement of the hearing faculty in the Vata dhosha.”

“... And the pain during menstruation? And the constipation?” Sabine interjected bewildered. “Do you mean to say, they too are pieces in the puzzle?”

I nodded with emphasis. “When we look at the main house of Vata, or “site” we can call it, which is the region below the naval, especially the uterus, the colon lumbar, the sacrum and also the lower limbs. Now just think of all your complaints!

Ms. Simon, see the reaction and the accumulation of Vata! See its blocked downward movement which has already shown in your body as menstrual problems for instance. And the formation of gas as flatulence. Even the myoma which is a Kapha problem – even that myoma is established in the “house” of Vata!

Sabine Simon’s eyes were now as large as saucers as she saw her past and present reflecting mirrorlike in front of her while I explained the continuity of the symptoms during her whole life.

“Even your gestures, your forgetfulness with your medical documents and your tablets (Ms.Simon blushed richly at this point) your nervousness, your affinity for food like cold salads, and bread suggest strongly that the disease is well established in you.

Living beings all have two types of intelligence. One is our health intelligence, which is the natural urge followed by the body to keep healthful balance, also called in Ayurveda the healing “GOD” known as Dhanwanthari.

The *creation* of healthy tissue or the *Generative* force as called in my country, India, is “**Brahma**”.

The pattern of *Organising*, the *maintainance* of health and the warmth of the body are from this second force: “**Vishnu**”.

The *Destroying* of bad tissue, the process of elimination from the body, the gradual drying up of body and mind are performed by the third force called “**Shiva**”.

I feel that the deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are like Kapha, Pitta and Vata. The Generator of life, the Organisor and the Destroyer – taking the first letters of each word, we find *GOD*. The sum of this would be Dhanwanthari – the healing power of the intelligence within.

However, when we are in a state of “Dis-ease”, it is the intelligence of the disease that calls the shots. In its urge to survive, it will generate toxins and organize the toxins in such a manner that will destroy the body.

Let me ask you a question, Ms. Simon: why is it that you are so fond of foods that increase your Vata disease? Cold and dry foodstuffs! It suggests that the Vata disease with its active intelligence wishes to increase its hold on you and causes the craving! If you would take the opposite of that which you long for – for instance, warm foods and unctuous, or in other words foods with a wholesomely oily or creamy consistency (no! I do not mean “greasy”!) or say even a liquid diet, which would contain more of the water element, aggravated unhealthy Vata would subside and swing towards the healthy balanced Vata state, which is conducive to your health. Kapha, the unctuous, lubricating and soothing element would have a chance to regenerate and increase in your mental and physical state.

Ayurveda says that to balance dry, cold Vata, we need “Sneha”. We need this oleating, lubricating medium. “Sneha” is also known as the quality “love”. Actually, it really means, that you need to be loved or to give yourself the love you need to be in a state of joyful balance!”

The patient looked crestfallen. It was obvious again that there was a marked absence of Sneha and its healing, balancing qualities in her life.

I continued. “When we analyse the second dhosha in our body called “Pitta” or the fire element, you can easily imagine that the diseases will have an inflammatory nature. We’ll be talking about “ I stopped and gave the crestfallen lady a chance to distract herself. “You tell me Ms.Simon!” I encouraged her.

“Well... I guess fever?” She said shyly. “And what about skin problems like, maybe, eczema?”

I beamed at her. “That’s exactly it – you’re getting the hang of it! Lets talk fever, eczema, ulcers, psoriasis, gastritis and mainly all diseases of the blood. Pitta is in charge of the blood”

Now Pitta also has corresponding sense organs where “he” will “reside”. Those organs will be the eyes, the stomach and the small intestine.

A Pitta personality will be short-tempered, easily prone to diseases of the stomach and of the blood. And at this point, I am getting back to you, Ms. Simon. While you were describing your past life and symptoms, I discerned a certain “fire” in your eye; parallel to that I also sensed a frustration which you seem to have developed during the past years. Now these observations make me think that your second powerful dhosha out of the three dhoshas, which are inherent in all of us, as being Pitta or the fire energy.

We now come to “Agni”, which is the word for the digestive fire in the body. In your case, it seems to have decreased remarkably. Agni or the digestive potential has wandered off, displaced and neglected, out of its correct site in the stomach into some other corner of the body. The result is gas formation and thereby flatulence. And also lack of appetite, malabsorption even though you are eating. The ability to act shows that “agni” is low in his own “house” but simultaneously a bad Pitta is in the body. As you see, each dhosha has a good constructive important side to it and a negative disease-bringing side to it where it will harm the body. Eat your favourite spicy indian food, Ms. Simon – this is going to cause havoc in your body and in your mind by drying them out further!”.

Ms. Simon sighed deeply, mentally saying a sorrowful goodbye to “Taj Mahal”, her frequent haunt.

As a feeble comfort, I poured her more water. “Kapha creates more organic types of diseases like obesity or diabetes, respiratory problems for instance. Those type of people are generally more sturdy in build, they are more tranquil-natured. All very positive but they tend to put on weight quickly, even if they eat what we would call “moderately”. The corresponding organ for Kapha is the tongue. I can't say that you have any increase in the kapha element. Actually, your thin and angular figure, your instability and dryness show that a very small amount of good kapha or the water and earth elements are prevalent. This is not good for your personal balance. There is a lack here.

So, Ms. Simon: in your case, our aim should be to reduce Vata and Pitta elements and increase healthy Kapha.

Ms. Simon leaned forward eagerly. “How do we do this now; Dr. Jeevan? Eat more cream and oil? Find a nice boyfriend?”

I laughed and warned her “I said “*healthy* kapha!” – this does not mean stuffing yourself with oils, creams and fats and winking at strange men on the other side of the road! Let's have a look at *the birth, the process* of disease and its *progress* as stated in Ayurveda first, shall we? It is important that you know why you are doing what you shall be doing! The logic must be made clear to you.

We are coming to a unique feature in ayurveda now. You will not find this feature in any other system of medicine. We are going to talk about the “Dhatus” or roughly translated “tissue systems”.

The Queen of Vata Problems looked blank. “Is there more to come? I thought we could get down to the prescription now...”

“Aha!” I exclaim triumphantly “There speaks the impatient Vata!”
Sabine had the grace to colour on her pale cheeks.

“When our dhoshas Kappa, Pitta and Vata function properly and all is sweetness and light, the food and *even the impressions* we ingest through our five senses – and here I am talking about emotional impressions, Ms. Simon ! – produce with the help of our faithful “Agni” or digestive fires - seven dhatus or tissues of which our bodies are made!

Comprehensive nodding on the other side of the desk. “Of course! we are what we eat!” she exclaimed.

I nodded but raised a majestic finger: “Not quite, unfortunately. Ayurveda says “We are what we resorb” – but I’m getting to that point....”

“You will agree with me that the body is a combination of Dhoshas – the Vata, the Pitta and the Kappa. We now throw in the Dhatus or tissues which we have absorbed in their raw state in the form of food and drink and also in the form of impressions and emotions.

We absorb the food juice, we absorb our emotional impressions! It now happens that *the physical and well as the mental* “Agni” or digestive fire transforms that which we have ingested mentally and physically! The transformed food and the impressions (which are actually emotions) construct the tissues which accompany us for a while in our lives, as our mind and body. Can you follow me?”

Sabine frowned. “How can digestive juices absorb impressions and emotions?” she asks wrinkling up her nose and waving her hands in vata style.

I replied “That’s a tale for long winter evenings so lets just accept it for now as a “given”! Its important for you to have an understanding of the basics.

The nutritional juices after the digestion of food is the first tissue. We call this “Rasa” Or roughly and crudely translated into western terms, it will be “plasma”. Now, it is important for the food to be of top quality because the health and stability of the rest of the other six tissues depends on the purity of the health and proper functioning of this Rasa tissue which is first in line! Take your case, Ms. Simon: if there is not enough liquid in the food at the onset, then the other tissues will also gradually dehydrate!”

“That’s why you frown at my eating bread, Dr. Jeevan?” she asked.

“In *your particular case* history, with *your particular dhosha*, with *your particular present health situation*, bread has to be drastically reduced when being eaten in dry condition. Like the infamous ham or cheese sandwiches, we stuff ourselves with in this society!” I said wagging a finger to get the point home. “Go ahead with a slice of bread accompanied with a warm soup or stew! Or even a mild Indian curry!”

The curry fan’s face lit up! “Oh!” she exclaimed, delighted “Would I be allowed that? A mild and creamy indian dish?”.

“You’re welcome to all those dishes of exactly that description”! I answered, happy to be a bringer of good news for a change.

From this Rasa tissue, the food proceeds to tissue no. 2 – which is “Rakta” or the blood tissue with its fiery colour – red! And after the filtration process here too – where the tissue takes what it needs to sustain its optimal stability and health, it passes the food juice on further. This goes on through the other 5 tissues. We’ve got the Mamsa (muscular tissue), the Medha tissue (adipose tissue), Asthi (bone, joint, tendon and connective tissue), Majja tissue (bone marrow tissue which also represent the deeper tissue such as brain and spinal cord tissue and the neurons) and the final tissue is the finest and most subtle. We call it the “Sukra” tissue and what it entails is the sperm, ovum. We talk about the potential for a future generation. But also the immunological strength of a person.

This subtle anatomy is also very interesting when we follow the development of a foetus. In the first stage, we see the zygote or initial cell combination as a watery, juicy formation. The next development is the circulation. Then follow the muscles and the fat tissue. The infant grows and develops further. When the child’s bone development is completed, the child starts to walk.

Brain development involves a nature which will understand and which will question. Finally when the development is completed, the seventh tissue in the form of sperm and ovum develop. We see here seven months for seven tissues. The rest of the 3 months are only there for the organism to gain full maturity.

It is important for you to understand that there is a pattern in the development of tissue. What will surprise you Ms. Simon is that disease also has the very same pattern of development!.

The patient gave her best frown, signifying that this is indeed new to her.

“First the disease will begin in the house of Kapha, then it will graduate to the house of Pitta and finally, in its last stages, it will be in the house of Vata”

Sabine interrupted saying “So there is no escaping those Dhoshas is there?”

“No” I answer “All that is, is categorized under these dhoshas and all that is, goes through the same pattern.

Excessive mucous production, acidic eructations and gas formations are the premonitory symptoms of toxins in our body. This is a result of our low agni / digestive transformation fire. This is the root of absolutely *all* evil – bear this in mind Ms. Simon! Indeed, memorize this! Low agni – high toxin content! And the opposite: high Agni, low toxin content! What do we call these toxins? Ayurveda calls it “Ama”. Be they, mucous, be they acidic, be they gaseous.

When the body begins to choke up with this evil Ama stuff, the God of healing which resides within us, as I mentioned earlier “Dhanwanthari” - or in a more scientific manner, one could call it “the stabilizing, balancing or healing intelligence” within us, takes over. This intelligence uses the tools of fever, purgation and vomiting to rid the body of the harmful. These tools are the intentional eliminating functions of the body.

Reduced appetite and fatigue signal to us that the body requires strength to fight disease. But we, Ms. Simon, as slaves to our senses, suppress these symptoms with chemical weapons in the form of modern pharmaceuticals. What happens when we imbibe pharmaceuticals when we commence illness? The body tries to put the nutritional essence, which we called “food juice” just a little while ago, along with the pharmaceutical chemical, into the first tissue! the chemical is a toxin in the eyes of the organism. So we are contaminating the line of tissues with more “Ama”! The normal reaction of the body is to produce a fever or as we say in Ayurveda “Jwara” to burn off any ama. Be it mental or physical”.

Sabine leaned forward asking: “Fever burns off mental toxins? How?”

I replied simply “As I said by a burning or transforming action. Mental impressions too are burnt off . There is a mental digestion period. Think of you watching a horror movie... it will take you time to “digest” this. Not necessarily with fever but with time and absorption of other positive impressions etc. Many workaholics will suddenly get fevers. They need time to transform their overburdened minds.

Indeed, fever is characterized by general weakness, loss of appetite, headache even for body and for the mind. The best thing you can do is to follow your natural instinct. Fasting and resting.

The body speaks a clear order. Most of our society feel they have to listen to the head. So we suppress because we have to “function”. We give our instincts the back seat. No... actually, we give our bodies the cheap seats! Like the cheap seats in the cinemas in India – the Gallery!! We suppress our dis-ease with chemical weapons!

Ms. Simon, hear me! What does our body now do?”

Ms. Simon’s face is a picture of bewilderment “I’ve done this all these years and all I know is that nothing really got better”.

“There you are!” I said triumphantly. “Things get worse, but we don’t necessarily realize them getting worse! After swinging our chemical battering ram, we may find initial relief but – and here it comes – the body pushes the ama into the next tissue – the blood tissue. The toxin now sits comfortably in the tissue which is in charge of skin production. What do we find here?

Nice juicy skin problems coming up like itch, eczema. And what do we have in this part of the world by the basketful? Allergies. Lots of “higher” complaints join in with time – we call them “Psoriasis”, “Menstrual problems”. According to our Ayurveda, each and every reaction is a signal for a person to take responsibility for his health and well being, just like you are beginning to do now. To understand which tissue is involved and which dhosha element is involved in its corresponding tissue.

“But what do we do? “ I sighed dolefully, not without a hint of the dramatic “We mask the signals by smearing cortisone creams into our skin. There is no thought of cleansing our bodies or not the faintest idea about changing our food patterns or life styles – at least for a period of time until balance ensues. Main thing is we can function”.

Sabine Simon is busy nodding and making noises of agreement.

She said: “Well, most of us have no idea that the activities of our daily life and our capacity to digest toxins mentally or physically are the cause of these problems, Dr. Jeevan. You have to be merciful in your judgement! What we call modern science focusses on isolating a germ or virus or whatnot which is blamed as the *cause* of making us sick! So we hand over our personal responsibility for our “dis-ease” – as you call it – to what we consider to be higher authorities. Its all so much easier isn’t it?” she ends ironically.

“Indeed” I sigh. “It may be a single isolated patient who has the idea that it is the already deranged bodily functions that generate the bacteria and virus. If our immune systems were well and strong, we could face almost anything. Our immune system is a highly organized system of intelligent and strong soldiers. If we treat them well and nourish them well, we can face any oncoming army! Its as simple as that.”

“So the toxins travel stage by stage onto the next tissue level?” asks Sabine Simon aghast.

“I’m glad you’ve grasped the principle. They go on to the muscular tissue and create myoma, cysts and polyps”.

The lady opposite was doing some sort of hand-wringing act while shaking her head in horror.

“Yes” I say grimly “and on we go to the fatty tissue. There it produces hypercholesterol, obesity and diabetes”.

“I don’t believe this! Obesity too?” she exclaimed. “All those people out there with weight problems? Battling with all kinds of diets? I suppose that’s why most diets cannot really have a lasting effect. And what about diabetes? That too is a result of suppressed disease?”

I nodded, waiting for all this information to sink in.

She broke the silence “I now finally understand how my illnesses and “dis-ease” simply *had* to come about. Its logical, isn’t it? So clear. Just.... well, just so, so ... – logical”. She relapsed into her silence. “Actually, when I follow my “via dolorosa” or “path of pain”, Dr. Jeevan, the menstruation problems, the myoma, the allergic reactions on the skin, the polyarthritis as a sort of “Grand Finale”...”

I interrupted: “Oh no, Ms. Simon – that is not the “Grand Finale” – the “poisonous snake will move further, there is more tissue for it to destroy....”

The poor woman in front of me almost shouted “No! No more! As you say, it really does resemble some sort of venomous serpent. Slithering its way unseen to all of us... Something out of a horror movie..”

“Well... that’s just the way it goes. Let me continue... You will now understand that the pain in joints and the involvement of many joints show that the fifth tissue - “Asthi” is involved. Bone tissue. The disease is established in the bone and joints which are Vata tissue, remember Ms. Simon? And the sense organs are the ears, the skin and the house is the Colon. Now logically speaking, you will agree that the previous diseases were in the previous tissues”.

More vigorous nodding. “I think I’ve grasped the idea Dr. Jeevan, I’ve not got the terms and expressions right yet”

“Ms. Simon, you only have to grasp the principle! And I am going to show you how one can forecast the future of these neglected, or even, one could say “aggravated” conditions. I know you shouted “No More!!” a minute ago but I want you to grasp how Vata will continue”.

Sabine sat bolt upright in her chair, paying close attention. She prepared herself mentally to listen to a possible prognosis of her present condition. I had the impression that she had even stopped breathing.

I continued. “The disease-intelligence has the will to spread. The serpent will continue its motion forward. Its like a game of dominoes, Ms. Simon”.

Within the next few years, we will be looking at possible problems related to the powers of concentration. We will be facing possible neurological problems like Alzheimer”.

I smiled at her in an effort to pacify her shock.

“You see, when it reaches the final tissue, the whole disease is well developed and established in each tissue. It can also affect the “memory chip” of our whole body - the sperm or ovum, the immunity and it begins to cause auto-immune diseases. See! it even affects the next generation! Think of the poor innocent and contaminated next generation!

I find that it generally takes a span of 10 years for the passage of toxins to travel from one tissue to the next. Think of your initial life span from 10 to 20 years of age. Disease will be connected to the blood tissues. From the 20s to the 30s, you will see the arrival of muscular tissue-connected complaints – as we said : myoma and cysts and so on. We then hit the forties. What do we find in our naughty forties? We find the problem with fat-related tissue. In our fifties, we begin to have trouble with bone and joint related tissue. And so on and so forth....

The constructions of the tissues are from rasa to Sukra, but the natural destruction is from the 7th tissue backwards.

Sabine Simon said softly “I’m hitting my fifties. So I have to take a look at my bones. Isn’t that so, Dr. Jeevan?”

I smiled acknowledging her comment.

“Ms. Simon, the cold and damp weather as we have it here in Europe, increases Vata. That is why you always had a problem in winter or even during a rainy spell. But right now, at this point of time, your complaints are always there, regardless of seasons. So this suggests that the disease has established itself nice and cosy”.

“So when do other dhoshas increase?” asked Ms. Simon.

“Pitta problems start accumulating in Autumn and Kapha in Spring. See! Spring is the beginning of the year –again we start the cycle with Kapha. We have **Green** and we have flowers blooming. Then we have **Orange** and red colours – the Pitta season. Note the starting letters of the colours! And then we have “D” for “**Dull**” and grey and dried up and dark – a typical Vata season!”

In the same way, when you wake up at 3 in the morning, Vata is wide awake – remember you told me of your sleeping patterns? 2 in the morning to 6 in the morning is a Vata predominant time. The same applies from 2 in the afternoon to 6 in the evening! That is the reason why you feel tired and take your nap!”

Sabine looked stunned. “Of course! We’re back to cycles and rhythm patterns in nature!” she exclaimed.

“Apart from all these exterior factors, Ms. Simon, we have to consider the state of mind. Your incapability to face problems, your depression, your inability to take decisions and a general air of instability suggest that Vata predominance in your mind. We also say a “Tamasic” tendency in the mind. The habit of irregular meal times, intake of cold and deep-frozen convenience foods will only increase this tendency. Yoghurt, Ms.Simon! which you take in the mornings will always continue to aggravate this tendency! Yoghurt is “tamasic” food. Fresh vegetables, fruits and freshly cooked foods are pure or what we call “Satvic”. Spicy and acid producing items are “Rajasic”. They produce impetus and drive when taken in moderation, but cause ruthless ambition and purposeless activism for example, when taken immoderately. So all we eat and drink – all we think, has an effect on our well-being!”

Sabine Simon said gloomily “One has to be constantly on the lookout then, isn’t it? What one eats, drinks, thinks....”

“Ahhh.... “ I say dramatically. “Mindfulness, Ms. Simon is the key to a successful and healthful life!”
We both laugh.

“Let’s think of the body as we see it. It has a structure and it is earth/water so it is Kappa. But the mind is motion. So it is Vata. Your problems, Ms. Simon, start from here. So you need inner silence in your mind to counter the bad Vata increase, which is the root cause”.

Ms. Simon looked at me with exhausted eyes which spoke the sentence “The question is how?”. But she said instead “Doctor, I do know that I need some drastic changes. But I simply don’t have the strength and the will-power in me to change”.

I hastened to reassure her. “I understand only too well, Ms. Simon. We cannot achieve this immediately. It should be done slowly. We cannot disturb the poisonous serpent, the toxins we spoke about. To go through this, we need physical strength. Without that basic requisite, you cannot still your mind or work on the mind stuff. The procedure I am going to suggest will give strength to your body which will give you the leverage to work on the mind.

In Sanskrit, we say*Sareeram Adyam khalu Dharma sadhanam.*

“The body is the primary correct instrument . It is only in a sound body that a sound mind can exist.

Ayurvedic disease management consists of 3 categories. Let us go through them one after another.

The first part consists of mobilising the toxins in your fifth tissue. Do you remember why we start at the fifth tissue? I ask her.

“Yes. I’m pushing the fifties and we have a bone and joint-related disease to address. I understood you to say that we have to go backwards in the treatment. Push into reverse gear as it were. Am I right?” she asked eagerly.

“Absolutely!” I returned. “And how are we going to mobilize these toxins? With plants which correspond to the tissue damage” I answered my own question. “This initial phase will take 28 days. During this time, you should be taking a herbal detoxifying decoction and strictly adhere to special nutritional guidelines which are suitable for deranged Vata and Pitta.”

“What are decoctions?” asked Ms. Simon.

“Let’s say, plant components which are boiled down until there is only a bare essence left” I answered.

“So, its all about nature-based healing agents, is it?” she queried.

“It certainly is” I replied. “The plants which should be selected will act on the fifth tissue and will have a warming, oleating, soothing character, exactly opposite to the character of the Vata dhosha. In your case, I would select a combination of Rasna, Amruth Aswagandha and Gandharvahata as a herbal decoction”.

Sabine Simon looked suitably impressed at the mention of exotic herbs.

“This will mobilize the ama – the toxins, the root of all evil, we talked about. They will be mobilized and also, simultaneously, be dried out of the system. The mobilizing and the drying out will, in time, free the Vata dhosha from the toxins. This phase you can do by yourself at home”.

Sabine was all eyes and ears, listening intently. “What next?”

“When the Vata dhosha is free from the ama, we go into phase two. This is the beginning of the stationary therapies which includes several medicinal oil applications on the body with sudation.

Ms. Simon, you might remember that I mentioned the skin being one of the sense organs of Vata? So we will now use the skin as a medium. We will apply medicinal oils onto and into the skin as a means of coaxing back the vitiated or aggravated Vata dosha back into “house” or “site”, - the colon. The sudation will help this. During these treatments, Vata’s main symptom, namely the pain, will subside. And then slowly the other symptoms like numbness, coldness, rigidity of the joints etc. Your mobility and your flexibility will improve noticeably. The applications with their warm and oily quality will give you a sense of deep security from the outside world”.

“Oh, Dr. Jeevan, this sounds absolutely too good to be true” she said softly. Her voice grew fainter “I can’t believe that this could all happen to me.....”

I looked at her encouragingly “Ms. Simon, my professors used to say that during these treatments, we go back to the same situations where we were as embryos in their uterine fluids. The soothing feeling of security, protection and nurturing in both mind and body - remember I used the word “Sneha”?”

Sabine Simon smiled back “I think “Sneha” is exactly what I need right now. You are so right! What happens next?”

“After a period of external treatments, Vata and Pitta will return to their formerly deserted houses. Now we can begin with the main ayurvedic treatment which will address your particular problems. Pinpointing them as it were. We will “home in” on them! There will be therapeutic purgation with the help of herbs and also application of medicinal extracts and oils to the colon”.

“How does one go about treating the colon? By enema?” she asked tentatively.

“I suppose, one could call it an enema but we do not merely clean the colon. We apply medicinal plant extracts. You may know that the colon can absorb several extracts. Depending on which problem there is to address, ayurveda has various formulae for this very potent rectal application”.

Sabine Simon looked apprehensive but I continued.

“The complete second stage is called “Purva karma” and “Pancha karma”. It takes 14 days in your case. However, it does depend on the chronicity of the disease”.

Ms. Simon looked puzzled “ Wait a minute, Dr. Jeevan. My friend who did this pancha karma abroad, did not do all these three phases. What do you think of that?”.

I had to now to be quite firm and explain matters which would be new to her.

“Sorry Ms. Simon, there is certainly a major difference between touristy places in India and Sri Lanka, where the ancient medicinal system of Ayurveda is reduced to an oil mass devoid of any medicinal value. Ayurveda not only has got a massage system, it has thousands messages. And when we travel the long and costly distance to India or Sri Lanka nowadays and expect a proper ayurvedic treatment in the country of its roots, we generally stay at wellness hotels. We miss the period of “ama pachana” or the detoxifying decoctions. The preparatory period, which is, as you will understand, an extremely significant process”.

Sabine gaped. “Was that not the stage when our “Evil serpent”, the toxins is mobilized and dried out?”

“Well, there you are! This vital stage is left out. Plain oils are applied onto the body right from the start. There is no cleansing procedure which precedes! And then it is called “Pancha karma”. According to ayurveda however, external applications are only “purva karma” or the preparation for “pancha karma” – which, Ms.Simon incidently means “The five paths of cleansing”.

The patient was visibly deflated. “But I thought, if one goes abroad.....” she did not even finish her sentence.

“Unfortunately, that is not the case, Ms. Simon. Ayurveda is not all wellness and soothing massages. Those with true interest would have to bring time, money and honest dedication to their personal health with them. Who really has that nowadays? No, Ayurveda is certainly not “Wellness” It is medical wellness for healthy people (Sadvrutta) and medical treatment for the diseased (Athurvrutta). In your special case, it has to be a medical treatment”.

“I fully understand that, Doctor” she said somewhat humbled by the previous explanation.

“The agni or the digestive fire within you, Ms. Simon, will be fine after the pancha karma treatment. The elements and the dhoshas will be in balance again. The next stage will be to improve the agni and that will be the final phase. This consists of special immune-enhancing herbal preparations which are called “Rasayanas” or Rejuvenators in Ayurveda. These set up a disease prevention measure. This you will do at your home.

Ms. Simon, you will discover a new way of living your life during this period of treatment. When the body increases its level of fitness, it gradually becomes increasingly easier to change bad habits and to free yourself from negative thoughts. Your mind will gain subtlety during this period, which means it will be easy to direct onto the rails of right thought”.

She nodded “I can well imagine that Doctor. Now that you have explained it so clearly, it seems so logical and within my reach as well!”. Her eyes lit up as she spoke. She looked animated. I caught a glimpse of what she would return to as a personality if she took this seriously and went through the motions of ayurvedic treatment.

“Ms. Simon, you will enjoy tremendous energy after the treatment. But it has to be properly directed during this time. I am certain that you will have a completely new outlook on life afterwards”.

Suddenly her expression changed and her present self took over “But Doctor, how is it possible for me to be cleansed of all those miserable and negative thoughts?. Her voice had a whine in it. Her face looked doleful again.

“I have this horrid feeling that I will always be like this. I guess, its my character. I’m scared of dyeing. But I’m scared of living too”.

It was now time for my rendition of “The Baghavath Gita ” .

“Ms. Simon, listen! Lord Krishna says to Arjuna in the Bhagavath Gita – “The Enlightened grieve neither for the living nor for the dead”. He said it on a battlefield symbolising life.

Everybody faces battlefields in life. We battle with others or we battle with ourselves. You, Ms. Simon, need a change in your diet. You need a change in your daily activities. You need to forget or better: to work on issues you still have which result from previous situations in your life.

Ms. Simon, you need to move forward in your thinking patterns; to stop brooding and weeping over the past. The past is past and will never come back! Again I quote Lord Krishna. He says “Wake up! Act! Don’t think of what is going to result out of that action!”

But doctor my soul is full of Sin and diseased.

No. Mrs. Simon, Lord Krishna explains, the soul has neither birth nor death at any time. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain. Only the body and mind is diseased and cured by Ayurveda or Yoga.

As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

Look up on pleasure and pain happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat with an equal eye- and by so doing you shall never be depressed. The meditation program, breathing exercises during our treatment time will help you more for such understanding.

Ms. Simon looked bewildered and somewhat doubtful at the same time.

I explained “Just see yourself as Arjuna, the warrior. See Lord Krishna as the “good mind” or your intuition within you. Now see you and Lord Krishna working together in a partnership. There can be nothing but victory for you on the battlefield of life!”

Ms. Simon sat silently, her eyes sunken. The flicker of hope I had seen in her a little while before, slowly returned while she meditated on what I had poured out with such enthusiasm.

In a voice, suddenly strong with new determination, she said “I’m really grateful Doctor! I now see a ray of hope. Yes! I’m ready to cooperate with you, your suggestions and your treatments!”

“Ms. Simon” I warned, again raising a forefinger like an indian schoolmaster, “I have to tell you – the medicines can be bitter!”

She laughed. There was a new quality to her laugh. I was happy to hear that.
“I’m sure they are Doctor! But my mother used to say “Bitter makes you better!”.

I continued, wagging my forefinger and beaming at her “And: you have to be willing to spend at least 14 days in stationary treatment?”

She was now more than earnest and said “Doctor! If I am to feel like a new, improved version of the present day me after 14 days, then those 14 days are nothing! I shall certainly bring time with me! I realize now that this old machine needs a clean up at least once a year!”

I discerned that Ms. Simon had been replying my negative questions with a positive reply and was pleased to see that there was positive mind power lying buried within her.

I wrote down the ama pachana decoctions for her to be taken during the next 28 days. Nutritional guidelines, how to eat what and when and how to prepare it was all stipulated by me and explained to her in detail. We prepared her treatment protocol for the 14 days and fixed the date when she would commence the stationary treatment.

It was now time to part company until the next meeting after the home therapy.

Ms.Simon spoke very softly. She seemed deeply moved.

“Doctor, I want to express my very deep and whole-hearted gratitude to you for taking so much time with me. You made it a point for me to understand all this vital information. All the information on ayurveda, the importance understanding what role the tissues play and the birth of disease.... and all your efforts to encourage me as well...” her voice faltered.

“It is really marvellous because I can understand the logic behind. And I can understand the basics of what is going on in the body and mind”. Her eyes were glowing with the beginnings of enthusiasm.

“Have you any more questions you might like to ask?” I beamed back at her.

“Not really right now, Doctor. I’m going to have to digest all this first. May I take your little sketches on Vata, Pitta, Kapha and the tissues with me?”

“You are most welcome. In case you get stuck following any of the instructions, please just drop me an e-mail. I shall contact you immediately” I replied.

FEED BACK – (One year later)

Somebody knocked briefly but vigorously on the door of my consultation room. The door opened and a pretty lady marched confidently into the room “I may come in, may I not, Doctor?” she asked unnecessarily. She had come in anyway....

The youthful appearing woman made her way to my desk with a broad smile. Her pink blouse and her blue skirt suited her perfectly. Her sparkling eyes were familiar to me. But her prana (vital air); the “tejas” (radiance) and the “ojas” (aura) were different. I wracked my brains as to which of my patients had magically turned into this energetic being.

I took in her wholesome appearance, the skin had a glow to it, even though she appeared to be around 40. She was now standing in front of my desk, looking down at me, her hands on her hips in mock indignation. “Surely Doctor! Don’t tell me you don’t recognize me?!”

It dawned on me. Was it only some months ago, that a broken, grey and sallow Ms. Simon had sat in front of me? I gasped and jumped up, reaching out for her hands and then taking them in mine.

“Ms. Simon!” I exclaimed. “Ms. Simon! Is this truly you?! You look like a million Dollars! I guess its been around 6 months since we did the pancha karma and the final check ups!”

I stood there shaking both her hands up and down.

Ms. Simon exuded an aura of deep happiness and fresh energy.

“Do sit down, Ms. Simon! Tell me all!”

“Doctor, I was in the vicinity of the practice with my new life partner and I thought I simply had to come and say Hello to you! We’ve been communicating via phone and e-mails regularly regarding all the feed back and the panchakarma and so on but I thought now is the time, Dr. Jeevan should see the *new* me – and that with his own eyes!!! And here I am!”

I was touched and delighted “You did well in coming Ms. Simon! It is always a great highlight for any doctor to see that ayurveda has brought about quality of life or even a fresh lease of life to unhappy or sickly patients!”

“Doctor!” she said in an animated voice “Life is so full of new meaning to me now! I’m really and truly happy again. I have a wonderful partner in my life and that, thanks to you and ayurveda! Believe it or not, I did finally wink at a stranger on the other side of the road!”

We both laughed heartily.

“ I’ve brought you a small gesture of my appreciation from my religion. Please accept this little angel of protection as a Thank You for your ayurvedic care and your personal concern”.

She rummaged around in her voluminous flowery handbag and this time, even produced that which she looked for! She handed me her little token, which twinkled merrily as it caught a ray of sunshine. For a moment, I felt a deep symbolism in that gleam. Ms. Simon had crushed the serpent and finally found her own personal sunshine!

She got up and with sure, quick steps walked to the door, opening it and peered out. A man with pleasant features and an easy smile walked in behind her and we shook hands warmly upon introduction.

“Frank and I would like to both have a go at your infamous pancha karma treatment next year. Do you know, even though I go through all the procedures you suggested after the cure, I still miss the element of caring you gave to me during that really rocky time in my life!”

“ We must celebrate this!” I insisted with deep joy. “Which ayurvedic brew may I offer both of you to drink?”

It was a jovial question meant in humour. But Ms. Simon, the soon-to-be Ms. Schmidt, replied like a shot and with total conviction: ”I’d like a warming tea, Doctor. Cumin tea please!”



Conclusion

Ayurveda does not have a term equivalent to “Poly arthritis” but there is mention of a condition called “Vata Rakta/Ama Vata/Sandhigata Vata” which suits bone and joint diseases. I did not, therefore study the case sheets and the diagnosis of school medicine and the hospitals, which my patient did finally remember to bring along with her. As an ayurvedic doctor, one does not scrutinize these records because it does not give any understanding or support to my ayurvedic approach to diagnosis. On the contrary, it will distort my diagnosis or will lead to confusion, misunderstanding of the individual case. I always examine a patient afresh and diagnose the disease and the disease condition according to the *Dhoshha-Dhattu-Mala* principles.

Ayurvedic science enables physicians to make a provisional diagnosis of new health or disease conditions. I then design a treatment protocol to match my diagnosis, not deviating from the basic principles of ayurveda. The patient is thus cured. I do not, however, claim that Ayurveda can cure all diseases. But what I *do* claim is that ayurveda has the capacity to look at any new disease condition with the help of the *Dhoshha-Dathu-Mala* principles. The physician may thus be able to make a diagnosis, design a treatment protocol, set up nutritional guidelines and even set down a schedule for yoga practice and cure the disease either completely or to a great extent. Either way, an improved quality of life for the patient may be ensured.

It is a great pity that the 90 year old school medicine dominates the 5000 year old, time-tested Indian system of medicine. It is equally a pity that it is refused acceptance and treated with suspicion. It is mind-boggling that it is demanded of Ayurveda , which has strings of success stories to its credit, that it explains itself with the tools of modern scientific parameters. These tools are highly inappropriate, yes, inadequate for such a purpose.

There are innumerable instances where ayurvedic treatment has cured chronic diseases such as cancer, asthma or hepatitis, for which there are no permanent answers offered by the modern system of accepted school medicine. And which do not have any harmful side-effects.

The time has now come when all scientific and medical professions should come together to develop common parameters for improvement in human lifestyle and proper cures. The principles of Ayurveda should be given the prominent place they deserve.

Knowledge in depth of any kind cannot be attained by applying short cuts. This applies to the profound knowledge of Ayurveda as well.

There is no short cut to knowledge, to Nirvana or to wealth.

*Jala bindu nipatena kramasa puryate ghata:
Sahe tu sarva vidyanam dharmasya cha Dhanasya cha*

It is neither advisable nor appropriate to seriously judge knowledge as profound as Ayurveda without proper study of its system and principles or without proper experience this field.